

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:GWSCOTT:JJ

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TO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE

INFO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SO

SUBJECT: FINAL CALL OF SOMALI ARMS DELEGATION ON DEPART-
MENT OFFICIALS

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REF: A. STATE 184570; B. STATE 188052

1. THE SOMALI ARMS DELEGATION PAID FINAL VISIT TO THE
DEPARTMENT ON AUGUST 10 TO CALL ON ACTING ASSISTANT
SECRETARY TALCOTT SEELYE. THE DELEGATION SOUGHT AN
OPPORTUNITY TO SUM UP AND CLARIFY ITS IMPRESSIONS GAINED

AT ITS PREVIOUS MEETINGS WITH AMBASSADOR SEELYE (REF B) AND AT THE PENTAGON ON AUGUST 9 WHERE THE DELEGATION RECEIVED AN EXPLANATION OF THE PROCEDURES THE UNITED STATES FOLLOWED IN ITS ARMS TRANSFER RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES, AND DISCUSSED BRIEFLY TO OVERALL DEFENSE POSITION OF THE GSDR.

2. THE HEAD OF DELEGATION, AMBASSADOR ABDURAHMAN HUSSEIN, NOTED THE DELEGATION HAD COME IN THE HOPES OF RECEIVING A CONCRETE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM THE UNITED STATES. SOMALIA WAS FACED WITH THE THREAT OF FOREIGN INVASION; THE PROCEDURES WHICH THE UNITED STATES NORMALLY FOLLOWED COULD NOT SATISFY THE URGENT NEEDS WHICH NOW FACED THE SOMALI REPUBLIC. HE THEREFORE ASKED THAT WE RECONSIDER

OUR POSITION THAT LEGAL AND BUREAUCRATIC REQUIREMENTS AS WELL AS THE POLITICAL DIFFICULTY CREATED BY THE OGADEN FIGHTING MADE AN IMMEDIATE DELIVERY OF MILITARY SUPPLIES IMPOSSIBLE.

3. AMBASSADOR SEELYE REPLIED BY SAYING THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD MADE A DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SUPPLYING SOMALIA WITH DEFENSIVE ARMS. IT WAS MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR COMMON DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, A DESIRE WHICH ALSO FOUND EXPRESSION ON OUR SIDE IN OUR PLANS FOR ECONOMIC AID, AND ALSO IN ORDER TO AID SOMALIA TO
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FIND ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF MILITARY SUPPLIES AND THUS GAIN THE NECESSARY FREEDOM OF MANEUVER TO ADOPT A MORE TRULY NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY. SINCE THAT DECISION WAS MADE, A NEW ELEMENT HAD BEEN INJECTED INTO THE SITUATION. THAT WAS THE ESCALATION OF FIGHTING IN THE OGADEN IN WHICH, WE UNDERSTOOD, SOMALI UNITS WERE PARTICI-

PATING. WE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN ETHIOPIAN ATTACK WAS SO GREAT AS THE SOMALIS FEARED, BUT SHOULD IT OCCUR, IT WOULD BE IN RESPONSE TO SOMALI ACTION IN THE OGADEN. WE WISHED NEITHER TO CONTRIBUTE NOR TO BE SEEN TO BE CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONTINUATION OF THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT. THIS WAS A SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEM WHICH, IN ADDITION TO THE PROCEDURAL DELAYS IMPOSED BY LEGAL AND BUREAUCRATIC REQUIREMENTS, BLOCKED IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION. WHEN THE OGADEN CONFLICT WAS RESOLVED AND AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED AND NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED, WE COULD THEN GO FORWARD.

4. AMBASSADOR SEELYE ASKED THE DELEGATION TO NOTE THE STEPS THAT WE WERE TAKING TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS. WE

HAD CONSULTED AND WOULD CONTINUE TO CONSULT WITH OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES CONCERNING SOMALIA'S DEFENSE NEEDS. WE WERE AWARE OF THE HELP THEY WERE EXTENDING TO SOMALIA AND WE WERE PLEASED THAT THEY WERE BEING FORTHCOMING. WE WOULD SHORTLY HAVE A RESPONSE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO PRESIDENT SIAD'S LETTER. SEELYE EMPHASIZED THAT ALTHOUGH THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT GO FORWARD WITH MILITARY EQUIPMENT AT THE PRESENT THIS WAS NOT NECESSARILY INCONSISTENT WITH THE ORDERLY AND GRADUAL PROCESS WHICH WE ENVISIONED OUR RELATIONSHIP TAKING AND WHICH WE UNDERSTAND THE SOMALIS ALSO ENVISIONED, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE PRUDENT WAY IN WHICH THEY WERE UNDERTAKING THEIR OWN POLICY REORIENTATION.

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5. LT.COL. MOHAMED ADEN ABDULLA WHOM AMBASSADOR ADDOU CHARACTERIZED AS HEAD OF SUPPLY, AND AN OFFICER VERY CLOSE TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE SAMANTAR, SAID THAT IN SPITE OF THE TEAM'S DISAPPOINTMENT IN NOT BEING ABLE TO RETURN WITH ASSURANCES OF IMMEDIATE CONCRETE SUPPORT, HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE DIALOGUE AND RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED WOULD CONTINUE. HE ASKED US TO REGARD THE ARMS LIST EARLIER SUBMITTED BY THE SOMALIS AS AN INITIAL READING OF THEIR NEED. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE LIST CONTAINED A NUMBER OF DIFFERING ITEMS, SOME OF WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED TO BE OFFENSIVE BUT OTHERS SUCH AS MEDICAL SUPPLIES, COMMUNICATIONS GEAR AND LOGISTICS EQUIPMENT COULD NOT BE SO CHARACTERIZED. HE ASKED IF WE COULD NOT PROCEED, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH DELIVERIES OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPLIES. WE SHOULD FEEL FREE TO TREAT THE LIST AS A SERIES OF SUGGESTED ITEMS AND TO PROPOSE SUBSTITUTIONS IF WE THOUGHT THERE WERE OTHER THINGS THAT WERE MORE APPROPRIATE TO THE SOMALI REQUIREMENTS.

6. THE COLONEL CONCLUDED WITH TWO PROVERBS, THE FIRST "THE FRIEND OF YOUR ENEMY IS YOUR ENEMY" BY WHICH HE MEANT THAT THERE WAS A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE SOVIET/SOMALI RELATIONSHIP CAUSED BY THE ASSISTANCE THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS WERE GIVING TO THE ETHIOPIANS IN HELPING THEM TRAIN THEIR 300,000 MAN MILITIA. SECOND, THE COLONEL SAID "IT IS GOOD TO GIVE A HUNGRY MAN A FISH BUT IT IS BETTER TO TEACH THE MAN TO BE A FISHERMAN." THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH THE SOMALI DELEGATION MIGHT GO BACK TO MOGADISCIO WITHOUT AN IMMEDIATE ARMS DELIVERY, STILL THE COLONEL PUT HIS HOPE IN OUR LONGER TERM EFFORT TO COOPERATE IN THE SOMALI ATTEMPT TO MEET THEIR FUTURE DEFENSIVE NEEDS.

7. AMBASSADOR SEELYE CONCLUDED, SAYING THAT WE WERE
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PLEASED THAT THE SOMALIS WERE RETURNING WITH AN UNDER-
STANDING OF OUR POSITION AND WITH A FIRM IMPRESSION OF
OUR DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. IT WAS OUR POLICY TO DO
WHAT WE COULD TO STRENGTHEN THE TIES BETWEEN OUR TWO
COUNTRIES. CHRISTOPHER

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